

National Park Service
2002 Environmental Achievement Awards
Honorable Mention

Cynthia Cox,
Assistant Superintendent, Rock Creek National Park and

Michael McMahon,
Landscape Architect, National Capital Region

When Rock Creek National Park and the Friends of Montrose Park joined together to replace Montrose Park's playground, they were not only trying to improve the environment, but protect the children who enjoyed the Park. The old playground was installed in the 1960's, was covered in lead paint, and did not meet the Consumer Product Safety Council standards for playground safety. Because the playground was such a popular place for the community, Cynthia Cox and Michael McMahon recognized that this project should not be completed without input from its citizens. They formed a strong partnership with the Friends of Montrose Park to plan and design a new playground that would be enjoyable for the community and have a minimal environmental impact.

Every component of the new Montrose Park playground incorporates recycled materials. The custom-designed arms of the benches were made from recycled engine blocks, and all of the wooden parts were fabricated from certified plantation grown and harvested wood. The six new pieces of play equipment were made from recycled metal, and the surrounding 270 linear feet of wrought iron fence was fabricated from 100 percent domestic recycled material. In addition, the paint used on this fence was a low solvent-by-volume paint. The rubber surface covering the ground of the play area is constructed of 31,000 pounds of recycled truck tires and allows water to penetrate through, rather than cause surface water run-off.



Montrose Park playground

This example of the federal government partnering with community-based organizations can serve as a model for other projects in which resources can be shared to work towards a common goal. As a result of Cynthia's and Michael's hard work and partnership with friends of Montrose Park, the children of the District of Columbia have a safe, attractive, environmentally friendly playground to enjoy for years to come.